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SUBJECT: 17TH PARTY CONGRESS TO BOOST HU JINTAO'S
IDEOLOGICAL AUTHORITY

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Classified By: Political Section Internal Unit Chief
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Summary

¶1. (C) Embassy contacts uniformly predict that the 17th Party Congress scheduled for this fall will boost Party chief Hu Jintao's ideological authority by listing his doctrinal slogans together with those of his predecessors. The relative weight that will be given to Hu's various ideological slogans or the rhetorical form these slogans will assume at the Congress are unclear but do not appear to be politically controversial. Former Party head Jiang Zemin may be trying to interfere with the transfer of ideological authority to Hu, according to contacts. Comment: It is nevertheless unlikely that Jiang will succeed in blocking the elevation of Hu's status at the 17th Congress. Hu has not only the weight of Party precedent on his side, but his slogans are already well-established in the Party litany.
End Summary and Comment.

Passing the Ideological Baton--the Next Step

¶2. (C) In addition to selecting a new leadership lineup, the 17th Party Congress will approve a Political Report that is expected to include several of Hu Jintao's ideological concepts as the Party's guiding doctrine for the next five years. Veteran journalist Fang Jinyu (protect), Beijing bureau chief of the Guangdong Party Committee's Southern Daily, predicted that Hu will be recognized, at least implicitly, as the ideological heir apparent to former leader Jiang Zemin at the 17th Congress. He said the Congress Political Report, which is already circulating in draft form, will accept Hu's doctrines as a "guiding ideology" of the Party by including them in the litany of slogans that will be endorsed by the Congress. However, he said, the Congress will not write Hu's ideas into the Party Constitution, a step that would be left to a future Congress.

¶3. (C) Chang Guangming, Director of the Political Editing Department of Seeking Truth, the Central Committee's official journal, and Cheng Enfu, Director of the Chinese Academy of Social Science's new Marxist Research Academy, separately noted that Party tradition allows each successive Party chief to coin his own slogans and agreed that Hu's catchwords would be adopted at the Congress as the latest development

in the "Sinification of Marxism." Cheng doubted that the slogans would bear Hu's name, however, explaining that the Party's practice is to wait until a leader has left office before attaching his name to an ideology. (Note: The current Party canon recognizes "Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and "the Important Thinking of the Three Represents" as the Party's official ideology. End note.)

¶4. (C) In Fang's view, seconded by academic contacts Dong Lisheng of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (protect), Qin Zhilai of the Central Party School (protect), and Cao Huayin of the China Reform Forum (protect), in separate conversations, consideration will be given to writing Hu's ideology into the Party Constitution at the 18th Congress in 2012 when Hu is expected to step down. (Note: Deng Xiaoping's ideology was endorsed in the Political Report of the Party's 14th Congress in 1992, but was not written into the Party Constitution until the 15th Congress in 1997 after he died. Jiang's "Three Represents" doctrine was written into the Party Constitution at the 16th Party Congress in 2002, but without his name attached. Hu Jintao was promoted to Party chief at that Congress but Jiang retained the chairmanship of the Central Military Commission. End note.)

Let A Hundred Slogans Bloom

¶5. (C) Party leaders have not reached a consensus on the final form that Hu's slogans will take, Embassy contacts told us, but they did not see this as a sign

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of political controversy. The central challenge for Party theorists, they say, is to determine which of the welter of slogans now associated with Hu's leadership should constitute the decisive element in his ideological profile. The current frontrunners are the "Scientific Development Concept" and the "Socialist Harmonious Society." The Scientific Development Concept, promoted early in Hu's tenure as Party chief, calls for balancing economic growth and efficiency with environmental protection and social justice. The Socialist Harmonious Society, the focus of an official resolution adopted by the Central Committee at its 6th plenum last September, signals an effort to come to grips with the deepening social conflicts spawned by China's rapid economic growth. Hu has also coined a number of other slogans that are also included in his contribution to the Party's ideological canon.

¶6. (C) Embassy contacts appear to be somewhat baffled by this rhetorical confusion. Fang said Party leaders have not promulgated an overarching framework to express Hu's ideological outlook despite formal endorsement of the Socialist Harmonious Society at the 6th plenum. In his view, the Scientific Development Concept, as a developmental strategy, is the means to the goal of a Socialist Harmonious Society. Cheng, of the Marxist Academy, took the opposite view, arguing that the Scientific Development Concept is the "controlling" element because economic development constitutes the overall "frame" of the Party's ideology and policy agenda. Although some theorists assume the Socialist Harmonious Society idea will take precedence because of its elevated status at the 6th plenum, Cheng said, it should be viewed as one aspect of a broader development model. Chang, the Qiushi editor, acknowledged that there is currently much discussion over the issue. He said both concepts are important and will likely appear as distinct elements in the Political Report of the upcoming congress. He

said the two constructs "mutually influence and reinforce each other," because the Socialist Harmonious Society, in showing the need to solve social conflict, "carries the development concept within it." On the one hand, the Scientific Development Concept is a "guiding ideology for policy" which points the way to a harmonious society.

¶ 17. (C) Cheng cautioned against making too much out of the current lack of ideological clarity, stating that at the end of the day, leaders' slogans are part of the ongoing "Sinification" of Marxism and the search for an ideology that allows China to "do things in its own way" and "not exceed its limits." In his view, it is not a good idea to amend the Party Constitution too often. Fang, on the other hand, lamented that Hu has coined too many slogans, making it more difficult to identify the overall concept he wants associated with his leadership. "If I were his advisor," Fang said, "I would tell him to slack off a bit and stop spinning out so many slogans."

Jiang The Energizer Keeps Going and Going

¶ 18. (C) A recent resurgence of high-level attention to Jiang's official writings, according to a veteran journalist, may be a sign that the former Party chief is attempting to interfere with the transfer of formal ideological authority to Hu. Official media announced in early February that the Central Committee was convening a six-day study session for provincial Party heads and ministerial-level officials at the Central Party School to study Jiang's Selected Works. (Ref B) The meeting merited a full Politburo turnout, except for Hu Jintao, who was traveling in Africa, with Party School President and Politburo Standing Committee member Zeng Qinghong presiding. According to Dean Wang Jisi of Beijing University's School of International Studies (Ref A), a participant in the study session reported that the original topic of discussion was something akin to the Scientific Development Concept but was changed to Jiang's works for unknown reasons.

¶ 19. (C) The Southern Daily's Fang said he was "stunned" by the Party mouthpiece People's Daily's front page treatment of the event, which appeared to pit Jiang against Hu. The paper splashed Hu's trip to Africa across the top of the page but trumpeted the authoritative nature of Jiang's works across the

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bottom. At a minimum, in Fang's view, the seminar and press coverage signaled Jiang's continuing political influence and bid to protect his ideological authority. "This was a Jiang initiative to remind the Politburo Standing Committee that I am still alive," said Fang. He was quick to add that Hu most certainly had signed off on it before departing for Africa, but that Hu's absence was telling nonetheless.

¶ 110. (C) Prominent investigative journalist, Wang Keqin (protect), of the reform-minded State Council paper Economic Times, did not see Jiang as being able to make his ideological authority stick in the long run. He thought Hu continued to give a nod to Jiang's formal status while preparing the groundwork to replace Jiang's doctrines with his own. "Think of it this way," Wang said, "if you are fattening up a hog or goose in preparation for a grand feast, you will treat them well before the slaughter." Others, such as Beijing University Professor He Weixin, were doubtful that Jiang's efforts would have a measurable political effect, judging that Hu can give Jiang his due without damaging his own political position.

Comment

¶11. (C) Despite Jiang's apparent efforts to hang on to his current status as the Party's supreme ideological authority, it is doubtful that he will succeed in blocking the elevation of Hu's status at the Congress. Hu has not only the weight of Party precedent on his side, but his slogans are already well-established in the Party litany.

RANDT